

Manual for the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences Open House Program

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Abstract

The purpose of the projects was to create a manual to help future student leaders in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo to continue to host a world class Open House program. The Open House program is a Cal Poly tradition and showcases to prospective students and their parents what Cal Poly has to offer. This manual will help guide leaders and serve as a document that can be edited and relied on for many years to come.

Chapter One

Introduction

Cal Poly has many traditions, but maybe the best loved and known is Poly Royal, an annual open house event that showcases the university. The first open house event on campus was the Farmers' Institute and Basket Picnic, which was held May 24, 1904. This was designed to be a monster picnic at the school, where noted educators and prominent citizens could address people. There were over 200 guests at the first Farmers' Institute. The Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees reported in 1908, "The day is now looked upon as an established feature of the school year, furnishing as it does excellent opportunity for 'extension work' in agriculture education among residents of a large community" (Poly Royal, 2010).

In 1933, plans began for a new campus open house. Julian McPhee supported the new annual event as a method of publicizing the school while preparing agriculture students for livestock judging at the state level. Carl "Gus" Beck, advisor of the FFA Chapter and seven agriculture faculty members were the first organizers of Poly Royal. Julian McPhee intended Poly Royal to be unique, and showcase Cal Poly's Learn By Doing philosophy, with livestock and horticulture exhibitions and student projects displaying visitors proof of the effectiveness of vocational education. Poly Royal expanded to a 2-day celebration, offering visiting parents, alumni, prospective students and community members an increasing number of school's programs and student achievements. In 1944, the event was downsized to a single day, and the 1945 Poly Royal was cancelled due to gas rationing and war-time restrictions (Poly Royal, 2010).

With the war over Poly Royal continued with annual themes, guests of honors, and agriculture leaders. Exhibits continued to evolve with the addition of the Poly Royal Queen, rodeo competitions, and results of student work completed throughout the year. Many crowd friendly activities attracted people such as cow milking contests, nail-driving competitions, the famous tractor pull, pole-climbing, and rodeo. In 1994 Poly Royal was renamed Open House, but President Warren Baker reinstated Poly Royal in 2001 (Poly Royal, 2010). Cal Poly continues to improve and build off of the legacy Poly Royal has left our university and showcase the learn by doing philosophy.

To participate the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) has a 2-day program for prospective students, parents, and community members. These programs are organized and put on by an Open House Committee, made up of student leaders, who volunteer their time. As student leaders graduate, it is important that there is something for future leaders to follow when planning such a historic and anticipated event. Open House is the biggest weekend for CAFES to showcase what it has to offer and what it can provide to prospective students.

Statement of the Problem

Due to the growing number of attendees at CAFES Open House it is important that the event improves each year, and student leaders are prepared. It is imperative that planning begins early and it is crucial timelines are met. The problem is that there is a lack of organized material for student leaders to follow, forcing them to rely on previous leaders memory.

Importance of the Problem

It is key that student leaders and Open House committee members feel prepared each year. Cal Poly's Open House is an event that is vital to the future of Cal Poly, and has the ability to affect many prospective students and their parents. A successful Open House is valuable for prospective students to get their own experiences on campus.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was to create a manual that can be utilized each year to improve and maintain the effectiveness of the CAFES Open House program. The project encompasses each committee's role, as well as what faculty and resources to utilize. Using previous knowledge and recommendations the manual will serve students leaders for many years to come.

Objectives of the Project

- To create a manual that Open House leaders can easily follow to assist in planning and preparing for Open House weekend.
- To have a manual that can be used by leaders with varying leadership experience levels.
- To design a manual that can easily be adapted.
- To design a manual that can be used for numerous years.

Definition of Important Terms

Listed below is a review of important terms that have been, or will be, used throughout this project:

- CAFES- College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

Summary

The Cal Poly CAFES Open House program is a life changing experience that has a positive impact on current and prospective students. There is a need for a manual that contains directions for committees and those involved to rely on year to year. Creating such a manual will assist any student leader in organizing the two day event. Having a manual will eliminate students relying on previous students word of mouth advice and have a concrete source to guide them.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

College Recruitment

College recruitment practices are vital programs at over 3,200 accredited colleges across the United States of America. More than 2.5 million students matriculate to a college campus for the first time each year, the role and responsibility of admission and enrollment personnel in higher education has become increasingly critical to the success of the institutions and the experience of the students (Hollingsworth, 2009).

Over the past 400 years of American higher education, admission and recruitment practices have evolved and changed. The success of market principles has increased the attention to the prospective student and provides more information. On campus visits with live presentations by college personnel are considered strong ways of recruiting prospective students. Welcoming a prospective student with friendliness, accessibility of faculty members, and attitudes of administrative officials are highly valued during campus visits (Hollingsworth, 2009). Programs such as Open House's, are a type of recruitment that allow students to see the campus first hand, meet with department heads, converse with students leaders, and create their opinion of the campus. This program also gives current students in CAFES the opportunity to expand their leadership skills and give back to the college.

Leadership Development and Benefits in Student Volunteers

Leadership development has been an objective for many departments and colleges across the country. According to Love and Yoder (1980), nearly two-thirds of students surveyed

indicate that they developed communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills as a direct result of curricular or extracurricular activities in college. Students also reported that activities indirectly affected their leadership. Together, 90 percent of students claim that curricular or extracurricular activities contribute to attaining communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills (Berkenbolz, & Shumacher).

Through a study done at the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources at the University of Missouri, students were surveyed regarding information about their participation in high school, college, and other activities, which may have contributed to leadership skills. One of the research questions guiding the study was, “What is the relationship between student activity participation and leadership skills?” Their findings lead them to determine that participation in student activities at the high school and college level is positively related to overall leadership development. A recommendation from the findings was the College of Agriculture faculty should encourage students to participate in activities, clubs, and organizations as suggested by Shumacher and Swan (1993). It is apparent that student participation produces a win-win situation.

Leadership is not something that all students possess, but throughout their college career there are many opportunities to improve these skills. According to Dugan, students that report any involvement in campus clubs and organizations demonstrate significantly higher leadership scores. Events, such as the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences Open House, are a great way for students to give back to their college and develop leadership skills. The value of learning through volunteer services is now being emphasized in colleges (Hollingsworth, 2009).

Learning outcomes of student volunteers are what students will learn, do, and value as a result of their participation in a volunteer program. Examples of learning outcomes are intellectual growth, effective communication, collaborations, realistic-appraisal, and social responsibility (Hollingsworth, 2009). CAFES Open House is a practical learning and student-community event, which will help students after college. The impact of volunteerism is reflected in the student's motivation to get involved and the positive learning outcomes of their experience. Each student has the opportunity to be involved in such experiences, but it is up to them to utilize them.

Chapter 3

Methods and Materials

This project was created based on the involvement and leadership with the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Science (CAFES) Open House Program. CAFES currently has a lack of material to guide new leaders' planning for Open House. New leaders are rotated almost every year, and there is consistency needed throughout the process. This observation lead to the creation of a manual that will be able to assist any student in successfully planning and organizing Open House. It is the goal of the manual that a student from any department, or level of leadership experience, can plan a successful Open House.

Before creating the manual Dr. Kellogg, Marlene Williams, and involved faculty were consulted to make sure there was a sufficient need and desire for a manual. These individuals were consulted when creating the manual, and asked for input. Resources such as interviews, and past program outlines, will be used to add history, and advice to the current manual.

The cost of the manual was minimal due to the fact that along with a print copy an electronic copy will be made available. The font of the entire manual was in Times New Roman, font size 12, and underlined, italicized, or bolded text may be used when appropriate. The outline was consistent throughout, incorporating tabs, bullet points, and committee sections. Each committee will have their own section to thoroughly explain the description, duties, and some even incorporating dates which tasks should be accomplished by. It is important that each committee was discussed in length and all points are clear and concise. In addition to descriptions there will be personal experiences from past years, and who to contact to help throughout the planning process.

After the manual was completed, previously involved parties were consulted and asked to provide feedback. Once editing was complete the manual was sent to print, with copies being given to the Dean's Office, current leaders, and the senior project advisor. A digital copy was also emailed out to the same group of people. The digital copy will allow for changes needed in future years, or to replace outdated information. From year to year the program may change, but it is crucial that future leaders have something to build upon when taking on the task of Open House.

Chapter Four

Open House Manual

The Open House volunteers are assigned to the following committees: Students, Publicity (PACE), Parents, BBQ, and Ag Pavilion.

Students Committee

The students committee is responsible for the speakers and organization of the program in the Farm Shop (Building 9) on Friday (Day 1). This committee will work with student volunteers from each department to mingle with students, and participate in questions and answers.

- It is important to work with the Dean's Office to contact each department head to get volunteers. It is crucial to have volunteers from every major, as well as have a transfer student group.
- As a committee, come up with a list of topics that prospective students would be interested in learning about. Once this list is created, look for Cal Poly students or professors to talk about each. Some example topics are 1. Living on campus (Fremont Dorm Hall President) 2. Study Abroad 3. Enterprise Project 4. Getting involved with clubs
- Volunteer shirts are an idea that was started in 2009 to help prospective students recognize Cal Poly students. They are for volunteers to borrow, and return at the end of the event. It is most effective to have a sign in/out table holding volunteers ID to make sure shirts are returned.

- An exit survey for prospective students is a great way to help the Open House committee continuously improve from year to year. Questions can be about what they liked/didn't like and what could be improved.
- Beware when separating students and parents before the students program. Some parents have a hard time leaving their son/daughter, but the students program is designed for students, and the parents should be attending the parent's program.
- It is a good idea to have a layout or map of the Farm Shop and where each department is just in case students come in late and can't find their major.

Publicity Committee (Polyculture magazine)

The purpose of the committee is to create a CAFES magazine for Open House weekend. This magazine will be given to all students on Friday at the first session in the Farm Shop. The magazine will be created with help from the Brock Center, and contain articles on highlighted aspects of CAFES, as well as has advertisements from clubs in the college, and other entities on campus. Clubs can purchase advertisements to help offset some of the costs for producing the magazine. In past years it has proved beneficial to have one person in charge of communicating with Club Services in Associated Students Incorporated (ASI), to make sure all transactions and payments are completed. Transactions should be completed as soon as they purchase an advertisement. It is extremely important to start creating the magazine early in Winter Quarter and gathering advertisements along with payments. Each club can design their own advertisement, but the author found that it was easier to gather the information, and have the editors create the ads. A rough draft must be provided to the Dean's Office in early March to be

approved. Once the magazine is approved copies can be made through a company on or off campus.

Parents Committee

The Parent's Committee works closely with the Dean's Office to prepare for parents to attend a program while their son/daughter is at the Ag Pavilion on Friday. This committee only requires one or two people at the most. They work directly with the Dean's Office, in gathering student speakers and making other arrangements for the program.

BBQ Committee

The BBQ committee works closely with multiple faculty that volunteer on the Open House committee. The Dean's Office and faculty members order the food, and committee members are responsible for organizing volunteers. To get large amounts of volunteers ask faculty to offer "extra credit" in their classes as well as ask the Food Science Department for volunteers. Two lines of food will be placed at each entrance of the Farm Shop to assist with feeding the large amount of people.

Ag Pavilion Committee

The Ag Pavilion committee has many important steps that involve lots of committee members and require organization. The author felt it was important to include detailed notes, including when items should be done by. The author consulted with past Ag Pavilion committee chairs to create the checklist below.

December:

- Secure Farm Shop and develop a tentative layout.
- Reserve PA system (Anchor system with two additional speakers, wireless and corded microphone, CD player, and misc. connecting wires). Consider an IPOD.
- Update CAFES display booth
- Print “Complimentary Coffee, Tea, and Lemonade” cards
- Purchase cable ties (to secure sand bags to curtain posts)
- Purchase large safety pins
- Check with the Ag Ambassador Advisor about set-up of Informational Booth outside of Farm Shop
- “I Love Cal Poly” buttons to distribute at the Ag Ambassador booth.
- Order 50 CAFES balloons from the Ag Ambassadors
- Purchase 90 balloons (yellow and green)
- Place order with “Got You Covered” for curtains, tables, and chairs.

January:

- Talk with the PACE committee about the student pictures and descriptions at the entrance of the Ag Pavilion. They can use the AGED department’s plywood dividers
- Order “Honey Huts” (2 regular, 1 handicap)
- Committee discussion/brainstorm of new ideas for the Ag Pavilion

February:

- Contact departments and ask for their help to prepare interactive displays- Attend the Dean's Council meeting with all department heads in February to discuss each department's involvement in the Ag Pavilion. Ask to have two students per department assist with set up and tear down of the Ag Pavilion. Contact these students in advance by email and inform them of the timelines and their responsibilities. Also remind departments to provide their own extension cords. Get help for Saturday afternoon clean-up starting at 3:00 p.m.
- Purchase plastic table covering. Two rolls (approximately 400' at 56" wide). The 2010 material was purchased from "Wholesale Tape and Supply." Their telephone number is (800) 642-8273. Their distribution outlet is in Northridge (Highway 101 and 405 interchange).
- Print "punch cards" in the CAFES Dean's Office
- Make arrangements to give away Cal Poly chocolates. Have Dean's Office purchase 30 lbs.
- Print signs that will direct people to the restrooms in Building 24
- Acquire a plastic or glass cake holder to serve the chocolate
- Make arrangements, in advance, with the Farm Shop to store extra tables and chairs in the Butler Building.
- Order the largest cylinder of helium possible, and balloon filler. Contact Air Gas in San Luis Obispo.

March:

- Locate banner to be displayed outside of Farm Shop (stored in room 10-100)

- Get welding rod to hang posters. Extra rod is stored in the cabinet in room 10-100
- Develop a country playlist on an iPod for background music
- Acquire department signs
- Make a schedule for those who will work in the CAFES booth during Saturday. All members of Open House should volunteer.
- Locate the “FREE CHOCOLATE” sign to put up outside of the Farm Shop to draw in folks. Stored in the cabinet in 10-100
- Acquire plastic bags and the bag holders, which attach to the green cans. (Stored in the cabinet in 10-100)

April:

- Order coffee, tea, and lemonade for the CAFES booth. Also purchase cups, napkins, sugar, cream, etc.
- Fill sand bags- Fill on Wednesday, leave in pick-up truck, deliver on Thursday morning-entire committee
- Ask to have one student per department assist with set up and tear down of the Ag Pavilion. Contact these students in advance by email and inform them of the timelines and their responsibilities. Ask each department to provide two students to help with set up on Friday and clean up on Saturday. They need to help the Pavilion, not the department display.
- Run the sweeper in the Farm Shop after the BBQ and before the set up.
- Acquire green cans with concrete for the balloons. Contact the Ag Ed Department to use their cans.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Summary

The creation of the manual allowed the author to work with current and past Open House committee volunteers. The project will be something that future leaders can use to help guide them in creating a successful weekend for prospective students and their families, current students, alumni, faculty, and community members.

Conclusion

Based on the author's experience and creation of the CAFES Open House manual, it is now ready to be implemented. Each year new leadership puts on Open House, which is why the manual is flexible in its language and suggestions. Changes may occur over the years to the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, the University, and the Open House program resulting in changes to the presented manual.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the CAFES Open House manual be used each year to provide historic insight, recommendations, and ideas on how to improve. It is also recommended that each year the chair or co chairs of the program use new ideas or make any changes necessary.

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